United Nations A/73/517

General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 November 2018

Original: English

Seventy-third session
Agenda item 108

Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Ms. Muna Zawani **Md Idris** (Brunei Darussalam)

I. Introduction

1. The item entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction" was included in the provisional agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly in accordance with Assembly resolution 72/71 of 4 December 2017.

2. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2018, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.

3. At its 1st meeting, on 4 October 2018, the First Committee decided to hold a general debate on all disarmament and international security items allocated to it, namely, items 93 to 108. Also at its 1st meeting, the Committee decided, on the basis of conference room papers before it,[1] on the final composition for the exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials on the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament. At its 2nd to 11th meetings, from 8 to 12 and from 15 to 18 October, the Committee held a general debate on the items. At its 8th meeting, on 16 October, the Committee had an exchange with the High Representative on the follow-up to resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at previous sessions and on reports presented to the Committee for its consideration, with a special focus on the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. At its 10th meeting, on 17 October, the Committee had an exchange with the High Representative and other high-level officials on the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament. The Committee also held

[1] A/C.1/73/CRP.2 and A/C.1/73/CRP.3, available at www.un.org/en/ga/first/73/documentation73.shtml.

Please recycle

15 meetings (11th to 25th), on 18 and 19, from 22 to 26 and from 29 to 31 October, for thematic discussions and panel exchanges with independent experts. At those meetings, as well as during the action phase, draft resolutions were introduced and considered. The Committee took action on all draft resolutions and decisions at its 26th to 31st meetings, on 1, 2, 5, 6 and 8 November.[2]

4. No documents were submitted for consideration under this item.

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.9

5. At the 15th meeting, on 23 October, the representative of Hungary submitted introduced a draft resolution entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction" (A/C.1/73/L.9).

6. At the 28th meeting, on 5 November, the Secretary of the Committee read out a statement by the Secretary-General concerning the financial implications of the draft resolution.

7. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/73/L.9 without a vote (see para. 8).

[2] For an account of the Committee's discussion of the item, see A/C.1/73/PV.1, A/C.1/73/PV.2, A/C.1/73/PV.3, A/C.1/73/PV.4, A/C.1/73/PV.5, A/C.1/73/PV.6, A/C.1/73/PV.7, A/C.1/73/PV.8, A/C.1/73/PV.9, A/C.1/73/PV.10, A/C.1/73/PV.11, A/C.1/73/PV.12, A/C.1/73/PV.13, A/C.1/73/PV.14, A/C.1/73/PV.15, A/C.1/73/PV.16, A/C.1/73/PV.17, A/C.1/73/PV.18, A/C.1/73/PV.19, A/C.1/73/PV.20, A/C.1/73/PV.21, A/C.1/73/PV.22, A/C.1/73/PV.23, A/C.1/73/PV.24, A/C.1/73/PV.25, A/C.1/73/PV.26, A/C.1/73/PV.27, A/C.1/73/PV.28, A/C.1/73/PV.29, A/C.1/73/PV.30 and A/C.1/73/PV.31.

III. Recommendation of the First Committee

8. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

The General Assembly,

Recalling its previous resolutions relating to the complete and effective prohibition of bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons and on their destruction,

Noting with satisfaction the increase in the number of ratifications of and accessions to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction,[1] and stressing at the same time that there is a continuing need to achieve its universalization,

Reaffirming its call upon all signatory States that have not yet ratified the Convention to do so without delay, and calling upon those States that have not signed the Convention to become parties thereto at the earliest possible date, thus contributing to the achievement of universal adherence to the Convention, which will facilitate its success,

Bearing in mind its call upon all States parties to the Convention to participate in the implementation of the recommendations of the review conferences of the parties to the Convention, including the exchange of information and data agreed to in the Final Declaration of the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, later amended by the Final Declaration of the Seventh Review Conference, and to provide such information and data in conformity with the standardized procedure to the Implementation Support Unit within the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat on an annual basis and no later than 15 April,

Welcoming the reaffirmation made in the Final Declarations of the Fourth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Review Conferences that under all circumstances the use of bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons and their development, production and stockpiling are effectively prohibited under article I of the Convention,

Recognizing the importance of ongoing efforts by States parties to enhance international cooperation, assistance and the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the use of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins for peaceful purposes, recognizing also that there still remain challenges to be overcome in order to enhance international cooperation, and recognizing further the value of building capacity through international cooperation as well as strengthening coordination and coherence of efforts of all relevant international organizations, in line with the Final Document of the Eighth Review Conference,[2]

---

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1015, No. 14860.

[2] BWC/CONF/VIII/4 and BWC/CONF/VIII/4/Corr.1.

Reaffirming the importance of national measures, in accordance with constitutional processes, in strengthening the implementation of the Convention by States parties, in line with the Final Document of the Eighth Review Conference,

Reaffirming also the importance of the review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention,

Recalling previous intersessional processes carried out under the Convention,

Noting, in the decisions and recommendations of the Final Document, that the Eighth Review Conference decided that States parties would hold annual meetings and that the first such meeting would start on 4 December 2017, have a duration of up to five days and seek to make progress on issues of substance and process for the period before the next Review Conference, with a view to reaching consensus on an intersessional process,

Recalling the decision of the Eighth Review Conference that the Ninth Review Conference shall be held in Geneva not later than 2021,

1. *Notes* the consensus outcome of and the decisions on all provisions of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction[1] reached at the Eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention,[2] and calls upon States parties to the Convention to participate and actively engage in their continued implementation;

2. *Notes with appreciation* that the meeting of States parties to the Convention, held in Geneva from 4 to 8 December 2017, was able to reach consensus on reaffirming previous intersessional programmes carried out during the period 2003–2015, on retaining the previous structure of annual meetings of States parties preceded by annual meetings of experts, and on reaffirming that the purpose of the intersessional programme was to discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action on, those issues identified for inclusion in the intersessional programme, and that the work of the intersessional period would be guided by the aim of strengthening the implementation of all articles of the Convention in order to better respond to current challenges;[3]

3. *Also notes with appreciation* that, in the light of the need to balance an ambition to improve the intersessional programme within the financial and human resources constraints facing States parties, 12 days were allocated to the intersessional programme each year from 2018 to 2020, that the meetings of experts for eight days would be held back to back and at least three months before the annual meetings of States parties of four days each, and that the meetings of experts would be open-ended and would consider the following topics: cooperation and assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under article X (two days); review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention (two days); strengthening national implementation (one day); assistance, response and preparedness (two days); and institutional strengthening of the Convention (one day);

4. *Appreciates* the information and data on confidence-building measures provided by States parties to the Convention to date, and calls upon all States parties to participate in the exchange of information and data on confidence-building measures called for in the relevant decisions of the review conferences, and invites them to make use of the new platform for electronic submission, on a voluntary basis, without prejudice to their choice of methods for submission;

---

[1] See BWC/MSP/2017/6.

5. *Notes* the decision of the Eighth Review Conference to continue and improve the database established by the Seventh Review Conference to facilitate requests for and offers of exchange of assistance and cooperation, and urges States parties to submit to the Implementation Support Unit, on a voluntary basis, requests for and offers of cooperation and assistance, including in terms of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information regarding the use of biological and toxin agents for peaceful purposes;

6. *Encourages* States parties to provide, at least biannually, appropriate information on their implementation of article X of the Convention and to collaborate to offer assistance or training, upon request, as contained in specific proposals, in support of the legislative and other implementation measures of States parties needed to ensure their compliance with the Convention;

7. *Notes* the decision of the Eighth Review Conference to renew the sponsorship programme established by the Seventh Review Conference in order to support and increase the participation of developing States parties in the annual meetings, welcomes the continued willingness among States parties to provide voluntary contributions, and calls upon States parties in a position to do so to offer voluntary contributions for the programme;

8. *Also notes* the decision of the Eighth Review Conference to renew the mandate of the Implementation Support Unit agreed to at the Seventh Review Conference, mutatis mutandis, for the period from 2017 to 2021, and notes with appreciation the work of the Unit;

9. *Notes with appreciation* the events organized by some States parties, regional organizations and the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat for exchanges of views on the implementation of the Convention, and encourages States parties to continue to participate in such informal exchanges and discussions;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to render the necessary assistance to the depositary Governments of the Convention and to continue to provide such services as may be required for the conduct and the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the review conferences;

11. *Appreciates* that the meeting of States parties in Geneva in December 2017 considered financial matters under item 9 of its agenda, noted with concern the financial situation of the Convention on account of, inter alia, systemic issues with the current funding arrangements, as well as arrears in payment of assessed contributions, and requested the Chair of the 2018 meeting of States parties to prepare an information paper in consultation with the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat, the Implementation Support Unit and States parties on measures to address financial predictability and sustainability for the meetings agreed by States parties and for the Unit for review by States parties in 2018, and calls upon States parties to consider ways of addressing these serious issues as a matter of urgency, in line with paragraph 19 (f) of the report of the meeting of States parties;[3]

12. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-fourth session the item entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction".